Welcome to the first May edition of the CJS e-newsletter. This week we are happy to bring you positive news from Japan on handling of the pandemic as infection rates continue to slow after a thankfully quiet Golden Week and the government finally accepts that the virus may not simply disappear by the end of May. We have inspiring stories of human kindness in Japan to keep spirits up, a brand new article from Nadine Willems on the trials of acquiring masks in lockdown Tokyo and a raft of cultural goodies on the theme of humanity versus nature in our Piece of Japan segment. You can find a message from CJS Director Professor Simon Kaner on the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures website and hear more from our SISJAC colleagues on their monthly e-bulletin. We hope you enjoy reading and as ever look forward to hearing from you on what you would like to see in future issues.

Written by Oliver Moxham, CJS Project Coordinator and editor

Editor’s note: Japanese names are given in the Japanese form of family name first i.e. Matsumoto Mariko

As Golden Week passes by with World Heritage Sites on high alert for daring sightseers, it would seem that most heeded the calls to at least not travel, if not stay indoors. The Asahi Shimbun used Fukuoka’s Hakata Dontaku festival as an example, comparing photos of main streets for festivities from last year with this year. This follows reassuring news that the currently overloaded healthcare system may have a chance to recover as infection rates slow further still, while Abe Shinzō has declared he will extend the national state of emergency to the end of the month, although there appears to be inconsistencies in regional approaches toward the virus as...
Osaka eyes up reopening businesses within two weeks [JP]. Further hopeful measures include a record-breaking stimulus package of ¥117 trillion (£881 billion), approval of anti-viral drug Remdesivir in treating COVID19 symptoms, testing of Avigan in 43 countries for further research and debating the possibility of shifting the academic year to start in September. This all signals a change in tone from the government as the realisation that this will not be a quick fix has finally dawned upon them.

However, the details of such drastic measures appears to be straining the 20 year-old LDP-Komeito political marriage, and an abnormally quiet Constitution Memorial Day reignited debate on revising the constitution in these exceptional times [JP]. Questions have also been raised over Japan’s low testing rates in comparison with its East Asian neighbours, a crucial measure in tracking the spread of infection and eventually paving the way to easing the state of emergency safely. UEA lecturer in International Relations and Foreign Policy Ra Mason has written on the impact this will bear on Japan’s international reputation. Furthermore, the ‘Abenomasks’ appear to be doing little to quell the demand for facemasks as pharmacies are turning away customers and unlikely vendors sell them at five times pre-COVID19 prices to make up for plummeting sales of their regular goods. Nadine Willems describes the challenges in procuring masks in Tokyo in her article below. The often overlooked need for foreign labour in Japan has also been brought to light as redundant hospitality workers trade in their business shoes for wellington boots to work on farms lacking seasonal labourers after Japan closed its borders.

Many independent initiatives to fight the impact of the virus have also blossomed across the nation, with crowdfunding efforts saving hard-hit businesses ranging from independent cinemas [EN] to Go parlours [JP]. Castles have also been in the spotlight for positive people-powered efforts, quite literally with Gunma Castle being lit up in blue to thank medical workers and ¥2.5 million being pledged to the reconstruction of the recently fire-ravaged Shuri Castle in Okinawa. Finally, the Asahi Shimbun lifts the mood with a report on the birth of a “dozy, chubby and fast-growing” baby spotted seal at Asamushi Aquarium, Aomori [JP].

Written by Oliver Moxham, CJS Project Coordinator and editor

Sources can be found in the ‘News from Japan’ section

Tokyo Days – Report by Nadine Willems

MASKS IN PANDEMIC TOKYO

This is my sixth week in Tokyo. It had all started well, as Japan’s capital seemed at first to have been spared the lockdown fate of most major European cities. But it quickly turned sour. The state of emergency declared on 7 April – the local version of confinement – is now in principle extended until 31 May. Even though statistics are not downright alarming, Tokyo and its surrounding conurbation remain the most concerning region as a site of infections, threatening the viability of the healthcare system.

The Golden Week holiday has just run its course, and the public has mostly complied with the Governor’s request not to travel outside the capital. But with the summery weather, the suggestion that everyone should “stay home” has fallen on many deaf ears. Although keeping to the social distancing rules – embodied in the three “mitsu”, i.e., the avoidance of closed spaces, crowded spaces and close interactions – people are out and about. There is, however, an unwritten rule: the wearing of face masks is de rigueur. Fewer and fewer people venture outside without one. My local supermarket has made
them compulsory for all customers. Bic Camera, the giant electronics retailer, has equipped its salespeople with masks and transparent face visors.

So, there are times when walking down the street feels like crossing the factory floor of a chemical complex or a science fiction movie set. Except that this is all real. As I look around my neighbourhood, I realise how much these street scenes highlight the presence of the virus. Even if the degree of protection a mask offers is debatable, the fact that almost everyone goes along wearing one – from children to centenarians, rubbish collectors to housewives, real estate agents, and the Prime Minister – makes the strategy against the pathogen a truly collective endeavour. We are all on the same team. Indeed, on the streets of Tokyo, as no doubt all other cities, the covering of mouth and nose increasingly acts as a social signifier.

“As Masks save lives”: A 1922 poster from the Ministry of Interior Health Bureau warning people that not wearing a mask puts one’s life at risk

As many travellers know, the donning of surgical masks is not new to Japan. In non-pandemic years, they are used to limit the spread of the flu and the common cold, and alleviate hay fever. In 2017 alone, 5.3 billion masks were produced for the Japanese market. These are mostly the disposable type made of synthetic fibres and whose shape tends to settle into the contours of the face. Although some documents attest to the existence of the practice in the Edo period (1603-1868), notably by miners, it seems that the custom of covering one’s nose and ears with a woven cloth took root at the time of the devastating flu pandemic of 1918-19. Similar contraptions were also used to ward off smoke inhalation after the 1923 Great Kanto earthquake, which caused uncontrollable fires in the city. Likewise, the practice got a boost during the high industrialisation period of the post-war era, when pollution fumes choked several areas of the country.

But as widespread and natural as mask-wearing is, I quickly found out that even in Japan procurement can be tricky, especially now that demand is so high. Since the small reserve I had at home was close to running out, I decided to try my luck at the pharmacy. Clearly, I was knocking at the wrong door. Signs outside urged customers to refrain from coming in asking for masks, as there were none available and the next date of delivery was “mitei”,
or undecided. The experience repeated itself at several other pharmacists. Would I have more luck online? Well, Amazon quickly let me down by cancelling one of my orders as soon as I had received a confirmation email, while the delivery of the other order got delayed by a month. Sharp Corporation, which had announced online sales of a limited stock, saw its website crash on the first day. As it turns out, masks are available if you know where to go, that is, to shops likely to have good connections with China, which produces most of them. Passing by one of the Don Quijote outlets, the discount store that opens around the clock, I notice that cardboard boxes spread on the pavement invite customers to take their pick. Both woven cloth and synthetic masks are available. In Akihabara, Akky, an electronics and souvenirs shop, sells boxes of 50 for about £20.

Like everywhere else, hand-made face masks remain an alternative, and creativity in patterns, shapes and colours sometimes adds a little bit of fun to the otherwise flat atmosphere of Tokyo’s “soft lockdown.” Finally, there is also the Abe Shinzō option: two white and washable woven cloth masks promised by the Prime Minister to all households in early April. The initiative drew some criticism in the press, which judged it being too little too late. Distribution has been slow, and some specimens were apparently damaged on arrival. Now that I am provisioned with a reserve from Don Quijote, mine have just landed in the mailbox. They are on the small side, loose fitting and unfashionable, but from my point of view, they will do as an expression of my solidarity, once I have exhausted all other possibilities.

Written by Nadine Willems, Lecturer of Japanese History at UEA. All photos taken by the author.
Each week, we will bring to you some fresh recommendations from CJS members to help bring a piece of Japan to you at home through film, books, anime, manga and more. This week we bring you recommendations on the theme of **humankind vs nature** as Monday marked the 36th anniversary of an all-female Japanese team reaching the summit of Manaslu in the Himalayas, becoming the first women to climb a peak higher than 8,000 metres (26,247 ft) above sea level. If you have any suggestions for themes or other recommendations, send us an email at cjs@uea.ac.uk.

**Editor’s note:** English e-books and Japanese e-books on Amazon can largely only be purchased on amazon.co.uk and amazon.co.jp respectively, meaning that English and Japanese e-books cannot be purchased on one account. You can read in both languages on your computer, but it is necessary to have two accounts. Furthermore, if you wish to read on a Kindle you must log in with either an English or Japanese account. Switching accounts on a Kindle will delete any content already stored on the device, so choose wisely!

**Books**

*Recommendations by the National Institute of Japanese Literature*

Director-general Robert Campbell of the NIJL (国文研) has announced that they will be releasing many of their premodern texts on infectious diseases in response to the pandemic. These will be available for free on their homepage at [www.nijl.ac.jp](http://www.nijl.ac.jp) with regular updates on the latest texts to be released. You can watch Robert explain the move in both English and Japanese on YouTube.

**Journals & Light Reads**

*Recommendations by CJS Director Professor Simon Kaner*

About a decade ago our former Handa Japanese Archaeology Fellow and Lecturer in Japanese Artistic Heritage, Dr Matsuda Akira (now at the Department of Cultural Resource Studies at Tokyo University) and I were invited to Akita prefecture for a series of talks and school visits on the theme of prehistoric stone circles (an early example of humanity getting to grips with nature). We were taken through the snow deep into the mountains to the マタギの里 complete with hot spring and matagi museum. Lots of stuffed animals and other evidence for these traditional hunting groups getting to grips with nature in various ways. I am no fan of hunting as a hobby, but have had various encounters with this form of ‘living in harmony with nature’ while in Japan: including with wild boar (albeit mainly in the form of the rather tasty ‘botan-nabe’ stews) in Tamba Sasayama, where I lived for a year as a BET; and more recently with officials in rural Nagano where they were having to pay ¥10,000 per head of deer (considered a pest, unlike in Nara) to hunters who were reducing their numbers. I was reminded of all this, for some reason, by the coverage of ‘nature invading towns’ that has featured on social media as ‘wild’ animals take advantage of the lockdown to re-acquaint
themselves with urban settings around the world (my personal favourites are the now famous goats
in Llandudno) – can anyone find any good Japanese examples? The matagi hunter Tanigaki Genjiro
features in the Golden Kamuy manga series and subsequent anime, and for a very readable account
my suggestion is Martha Sherill’s ‘Dog Man: an uncommon life on a faraway mountain’ (rather well
reviewed in the New York Times) which recounts the story of Morie Sawataishi who was in large
part responsible for saving the (reputedly fearsome) Akita breed of hunting dog – possible
descendants of the oldest known dogs in Japan who were afforded special burials by Jomon hunters
at sites including Kamikuroiwa in Ehime, over 10,000 years ago.

Manga & Anime 漫画とアニメのおすすめ

**Recommendations by editor**

**Space Brothers** (2007 – present) by Koyama Chūya
宇宙兄弟 作者：小山宙哉

Nowhere is the mastery of humanity over nature more evident than our forays into space. Set in 2025, *Space Brothers* tries to imagine the next giant steps mankind will take into the unknown through two brothers in Japan: Mutta, a car engineer recently laid off and his high-achieving younger brother Hibito, a fully fledged JAXA (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency) astronaut assigned to a mission to the moon. At a lowpoint in his life, Mutta decides to finally pursue his childhood dream of becoming an astronaut like his brother, struggling with other budding astronauts through the strenuous examinations required to go into space and having to justify to those around him the importance of such missions to take humans further than they have ever gone before.

The manga is available in English and Japanese e-books on Amazon.
The anime is available in Japanese on Amazon.

**Film** 映画のおすすめ

**Recommendations by the editor**

**Princess Mononoke** (1997) by Miyazaki Hayao
もののけ姫 作者：宮崎駿

Miyazaki has a long running theme in his Ghibli films of man fighting against nature, but nowhere is it more prevalent than in the epic *Princess Mononoke*. Set in Muromachi-period (1336-1573) Japan, Ashitaka, the last prince of the Emishi people, is forced to voyage to western lands in search of a cure after he is lethally cursed in defending his village from a raging demon. In his travels he passes through embattled settlements caught up in the aggressions of land-grabbing samurai, ancient forests inhabited by spirits both friendly and dangerous before arriving at an ironworking town firmly entrenched and preparing for war against the samurai and the old gods. In their efforts to tear up the forest and mine the earth they incur the wrath of the wolf gods and their human daughter San, nicknamed *mononoke-hime*, or ‘wild princess’. Ashitaka finds himself thrust into the role of mediator
between the gnashing jaws of mankind and nature, using the superhuman strength given to him by the curse that will be his undoing to restore balance and co-existence to a turbulent land.

Available in English and Japanese on Netflix.

Upcoming Events & Opportunities

Japan Society Book Club: The Memory Police by Ogawa Yoko
The Japan Society
Monday 11 May
7pm
Booking required — book here

Considered a dystopian novel, *The Memory Police* focuses on an unknown, surreal setting of an unnamed island. With Orwellian themes such as rule by terror and state control, Ogawa depicts the mysterious situation of objects disappearing from the island. As for the Memory Police, most of the citizens live their lives unaware of the disappearances whilst those able to recall live in fear. The story follows a young novelist in her struggle to overcome the state with concepts such as memory and trauma of loss being highlighted by Ogawa.

**Ogawa Yoko** was born in 1962 in Okayama. Since 1988, Ogawa has published more than twenty works of a combination of both fiction and non-fiction — in the process winning numerous major Japanese awards. Her works typically build up gradually — being particularly successful in her shorter stories. Her works vary widely from taking surreal approaches to grotesque works (both in the humorous and disturbing senses).

JSPS London Pre/Postdoctoral Fellowship for Foreign Researchers (Short Term)

Application Deadline: Monday 8th June, 2020
Fellowships must start between: 1st November 2020 to 31st March 2021.

Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) is the leading research funding agency in Japan, established by the Japanese Government for the purpose of contributing to the advancement of science. Our Pre/Postdoctoral Fellowship for Foreign Researchers (Short Term) provides the opportunity for researchers based outside of Japan to conduct collaborative research activities with leading research groups at Japanese Universities and Research Institutions for visits of between 1 to 12 months. Eligible applicants need to be either within 2 years of finishing their PhD at the time of
applying to start their fellowship in Japan or have obtained their PhD at a university outside of Japan within the last 6 years (on or after 2nd April 2014). Eligible research fields are not limited.

Please visit the JSPS London website here for further information.

Fellow’s experiences from former JSPS Fellows who have taken part in this programme can be found here.

News from Japan

For a running number of reported COVID19 infections, victims and recoveries in Japan, see the Asahi Shimbun homepage (JP): https://www.asahi.com/

For non-Japanese speakers, the numbers indicate:

**Nationwide infections:** Yesterday (total)  **Deaths:** Yesterday (total)  **Recoveries:** Yesterday (total)

国内の感染者：+前日（総数） 死者：+前日（総数） 退院者：+前日（総数）

For Ra Mason’s article on the impact of Covid-19 on international relations:

- Japan’s capricious response to coronavirus could dent its international reputation

BBC:

- Japan’s low testing rate raises questions
- Tokyo hospitals trying to stay ahead [video]

Japan Times [EN]:

- World Heritage Sites in Japan on alert against infections as Golden Week holidays start (29/4/20)
- Japan's medical system overloaded but virus experts see signs of hope (2/5/20)
- Abe to extend Japan's state of emergency through May 31 (4/5/20)
- In Japan’s record stimulus, which cleared the Diet, what will be on offer? (30/4/20)
- Remdesivir drug to be approved for coronavirus patients in May
- Japan school closures reignite debate on shifting academic year to September start (4/5/20)
- Japan urges 'new lifestyle' for long-term fight against coronavirus (5/5/20)
- Odd couple: LDP-Komeito political marriage faces testing times (28/4/20)
- Independent cinema campaign meets donation goal (30/4/20)
- Japan's farm and hotel sectors cooperate as pandemic halts entry of foreign labor (29/4/20)

Asahi Shimbun [JP]:

- For a visual comparison of the Hakata Dontaku Festival in Fukuoka last year with this year
  - 200万人、自宅で過ごしてる？中止の博多どんたく (3/5/20)
- As a quiet Constitution Memorial Day passed by on Sunday, the Asahi Shimbun analyses arguments from both sides on the great debate of constitutional form in the current climate
  - 憲法記念日、いつもと違う「集会」 改憲派も護憲派も (4/5/20)
- Crowdfunding efforts to protect Go parlours
  - 碁会所、クラウドファンディングで守ろう コロナで窮地 (4/5/20)
• For some good news in troubled times, AS celebrates the birth of a baby spotted seal at Asamushi Aquarium, Aomori
  - コロナ禍でもすくすく、うとうと 丸々アザラシ赤ちゃん (4/5/20)

Mainichi Shimbun [JP/EN]:
• Ōsaka eyes reopening of businesses in mid-May
  - 大阪府、要請解除の独自基準決定 陽性率など4項目の指標基に15日にも可否判断
• Japan to send Avigan to 43 countries for coronavirus research
• Central Japan castle lit in blue to thank medical workers in pandemic fight
• Okinawa golfers chip in 2.5 mil. yen toward Shuri Castle restoration
• Why masks are gone from drugstores but available at seemingly unrelated shops in Japan

Visit the Pandaid website for comprehensive material for educating on coronavirus. Nosigner has contributed many such manner posters including advising others to stay one tuna apart.

Reuters explains here the constitutional ramifications on Japan’s state of emergency:
• ‘Lockdown’, Japan-style: Pressure to conform, not penalties for non-compliance

For information on the new government pledge of ¥100,000 to all:

How to get the ¥100,000 coronavirus payout from the Japanese government

For a Japanese government public service video on coronavirus (Japanese only):

3つの密を避けよう！

For Japanese speakers, here are two articles in English from the Japan Times laying out vocabulary coming out of the crisis:

• The Japanese words used to encourage self-restraint
• Cancellations, postponements, suspensions — words that define the times

Click here for a comprehensive online document on Japanese universities adopting distance learning.

For more information on Japanese universities see this twitter thread by Rochelle Kopp, professor at Kitakyushu University, for resources.

General Links お役立ちリンク

Embassy of Japan: http://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp/
Japan Foundation: http://www.jpf.org.uk/
JSPS: http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/
British Association for Japanese Studies: http://www.bajs.org.uk/
Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation: http://www.dajf.org.uk/
Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation: http://www.gbsf.org.uk/
Japan Society: http://www.japansociety.org.uk/
EU-Japan Centre: http://www.eu-japan.eu/
Canon Foundation: www.canonfoundation.org
Applications for JET Programme: http://www.jetprogramme.org/
Japanese Language Proficiency Exam: http://www.jlpt.jp/e/index.html
UEA Japan Society: ueajapansociety@gmail.com
If you have any contributions for the next week’s e-newsletter, please send them to us by **12:00 Wednesday** to make the next issue.

The CJS office is located in the Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts (the mezzanine floor), although the office is temporarily closed as per university guidelines. You can always email us at cjs@uea.ac.uk.

To keep up with goings-on at CJS, follow us on social media:
- [www.facebook.com/CJSUea/](http://www.facebook.com/CJSUea/)
- [www.twitter.com/CJS_Uea](http://www.twitter.com/CJS_Uea)
Or visit our website: [www.uea.ac.uk/cjs](http://www.uea.ac.uk/cjs)

*Left: CJS Director Professor Simon Kaner
Right: Editor and CJS Project Coordinator Oliver Moxham*